

**THE FIFTY MINUTE
GERIATRIC
FELLOWSHIP**

RULE #1

**YOU ARE
NOT ALLOWED
TO GET OLD
QUICKLY**

COROLLARY TO RULE #1

IF YOU GET OLD
SLOWLY,
WE STILL NEED TO TALK

WHAT IS TO BE OLD?

GRAY HAIR

MORE HAIR SOME PLACES, LESS IN OTHERS

LOSS OF 1-2 INCHES OF HEIGHT

DECREASED WATER COMPARTMENT

VARIABLE LOSS OF MUSCLE AND BONE

NEED FOR MORE MAINTENANCE

WHAT IS IT TO BE OLD--II

- MORE NIGHT-TIME URINATION
- FLATTENING OF CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS
- INCREASE IN HETEROGENEITY—
HEALTH STATUS NOT INDICATED BY
AGE OR PROBLEM LIST
- LOSS OF RESERVES –
"HOMEOSTENOSIS"

WHAT IS NORMAL IN THE AGING BRAIN?

- DIFFICULTY WITH RETRIEVAL
- DIFFICULTY WITH SIMULTANEOUS PROCESSING
- DECREASED SPEED OF PROCESSING

USUAL AGING

- Multiple illnesses
- Multiple medications
- Decreased function

HOW OLDER PEOPLE GET SICK

- Confusion
- Sleepiness
- Falls/weakness
- Decreased Function
- Urinary incontinence
- Loss of appetite/Weight loss

RULE # 2

TO KNOW HOW FAR YOU HAVE
COME,
YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE
YOU STARTED

WHY IS ILLNESS MISSED IN OLDER PATIENTS?

RULE #3

IT ALL LOOKS THE SAME

WHY IS ILLNESS MISSED IN OLDER PATIENTS?

RULE # 3a

IT ALL LOOKS DIFFERENT

ATYPICAL PRESENTATIONS— INFECTIONS

- "BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE A FEVER!"
- MAY NOT HAVE LEUKOCYTOSIS (**GET THE DIFFERENTIAL**)
- URINARY INFECTION WITHOUT SYMPTOMS OR ABNORMAL UA (**GET THE CULTURE**)
- PNEUMONIA WITHOUT DYSPNEA OR COUGH (**GET THE X-RAY**)
- LATERAL SLUMP SIGN

DYSPNEA

- PATIENT MAY NOT BE AWARE OF BREATHING DIFFICULTY (I'M SLOWING DOWN...)
- FAMILY MIGHT NOTE PROBLEM, MAY OR MAY NOT BELIEVE PATIENT'S DENIAL (OR MAY THINK ITS AGE)

ATYPICAL PRESENTATIONS- CARDIOVASCULAR

- CAD/MI WITHOUT CHEST PAIN—
DISCOMFORT, FATIGUE,
LIGHTHEADEDNESS, SOB
- CHF WITHOUT DYSPNEA/ORTHOPNEA—
FATIGUE, SLOWING DOWN, INSOMNIA,
HEADACHE, CONFUSION, AGITATION
- ORTHOSTATIC HYPOTENSION WITHOUT
DIZZINESS—WEAKNESS, FALLS, FATIGUE,
“WATERY LEGS”

DEPRESSION

- Non-dysphoric depression
- More irritability, guilt, worthlessness, somatic complaints, confusion
- Primary anxiety disorder rare in elderly-anxiety usually means depression
- Psychiatric disease can present with physical complaints, and physical disease with psychiatric complaints

ATYPICAL PRESENTATIONS-- OTHER

- Vestibular problems without “vertigo”—**(look at the ears!)**
- Acute abdomen or meningitis with minimal signs **(be suspicious)**

RULE #4

**LISTEN TO THE
PATIENT...**

**BUT DON'T LISTEN TO
THE PATIENT**

RULE # 5
HICKAM'S DICTUM

**THE PATIENT CAN HAVE
AS MANY DISEASES
AS HE DAMN WELL PLEASES**

**ALMOST ALWAYS MORE
THAN ONE CAUSE OF THE
PROBLEM**

**SOME MAY BE TREATABLE,
SOME MAY NOT**

**DON'T STOP WITH THE EASY
ANSWER**

RULE #6

**THE MEDICATIONS ARE
GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN
OTHERWISE**

**ANY DRUG CAN CAUSE
ANY SYMPTOM
IN ANY INDIVIDUAL**

WHEN I GIVE YOU A
MEDICATION, THROW
OUT THE SIDE EFFECT
LIST

CALL ME IF YOU FEEL
WORSE

**ANY DRUG CAN CAUSE
ANY SYMPTOM
IN ANY INDIVIDUAL
AT ANY TIME**

MEDICATIONS

HERO, VILLIAN, OR EXTRA?

ARE YOU SURE THAT THE DRUG IS
HELPING?

ARE YOU SURE YOU NEED IT?

ARE YOU SURE THAT IT IS NOT
CAUSING HARM?

**SIDE EFFECTS CAN BE
ADDITIVE**

ANTICHOLINERGIC DRUGS

- Furosemide-0.22
- digoxin-0.25
- theophylline-0.44
- prednisolone-0.55
- nifedipine-0.22
- isosorbide-0.15
- Codeine-0.11
- cimetidine-0.86
- ranitidine-0.22
- dipyridamole-0.11
- Dyazide-0.08
- warfarin-0.12

More than 0.83 atropine
equivalents can impair self-
care of demented elderly

Furosemide, ranitidine,
isosorbide and digoxin=0.84

**THE DRUG LIST DOES NOT
EQUAL THE DRUG INTAKE**

RULE #7

**DO A
BROWN BAG BIOPSY**

RULE #8

DO ONE THING AT A TIME

(UNLESS THERE IS NO TIME)

RULE #9

**EXERCISE IS THE FOUNTAIN
OF YOUTH**

THE RULES

- 1. YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GET OLD QUICKLY
- 2. TO KNOW HOW FAR YOU HAVE COME, YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOU STARTED
- 3. ALL ILLNESSES CAN LOOK THE SAME (EXCEPT THE ONES THAT LOOK DIFFERENT)
- 4. LISTEN TO THE PATIENT, BUT DON'T...

THE RULES--II

- 5. HICKAM'S DICTUM--THERE IS ALMOST ALWAYS MORE THAN ONE CAUSE OF A PROBLEM
- 6. THE MEDICATIONS ARE GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN OTHERWISE
- 7. BROWN BAG BIOPSY
- 8. DO ONE THING AT A TIME--UNLESS THERE IS NO TIME
- 9. EXERCISE IS THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

THE FELLOWSHIP IS SHORT,

ART IS LONG